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SUBJECT: SLOVENE PRESIDENT PROPOSES KOSOVO CONFIDENCE
BUILDING MEETING

1. (SBU) Summary. On October 19, Slovene President Janez Drnovsek invited Contact Group (CG) Ambassadors in Ljubljana to lunch to lay out his idea of an "informal meeting" to be held in Slovenia to launch status negotiations on Kosovo. The invited would include Presidents, Prime Ministers and President of Parliament of all the parties (Belgrade, Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs) involved in discussing the final status of Kosovo. Drnovsek said he had discussed this with former Finnish President Marti Ahtissari whom he expected would be appointed as Special Envoy on Kosovo on Friday, and who would be invited together with other representatives from the CG. Drnovsek took pains to stress that this was to be an informal meeting with "no expectations" as to results, but for purposes of the players getting to know each other better without pressure "to perform:" as a confidence building measure. He said Slovenia was motivated to make this offer out of a strong sense of its close historical ties as a former member of the Yugoslav Republic and as the only EU and NATO member among the successor states. He made clear that PM Jansa and FM Rupel were on board with the proposal. Drnovsek said he would be traveling to Belgrade on November 2 and would propose the idea to all parties at that time. End Summary

2. (SBU) On October 19, Slovene President Drnovsek met with the resident Ambassadors of the U.S., U.K. (also representing the EU), Germany, France, Russia and Italy. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss an idea Slovenia had to gather all the relevant parties to the Kosovo status/standards talks in a neutral location (Slovenia) for an informal, confidence building meeting. (Note. FM Rupel has mentioned previously the GOS' readiness to play such a roll End Note.) Slovenes have been keeping a close eye on developments in Serbia and Kosovo and have pushed hard for status talks to get underway in parallel with on going standards work.

Beyond the Meeting: Ideas for Final Status

3. (SBU) In addition to proposing this informal meeting, President Drnovsek shared his thoughts on points that an ultimate outcome should include. Most importantly, the security for the Serb minority must be assured. Serbs in Kosovo should have significant autonomy for their communities as well as a permanent representative in government and parliament. He noted the strong emotional attachment have to their churches and historical sites in Kosovo and proposed that some of the most important Serbian cultural sites within Kosovo be given a sort of extraterritorial status. These could be the types of concessions the Kosovars should be willing to make to Serbia in order to gain sovereignty. Asked about the need for NATO or EU forces after status talks concluded, Drnovsek said they would still be required, especially around Serbian settlements, but that once the Kosovars had their independence, they would be less interested in threatening the Serb minority.

4. (SBU) Saying that Kosovo independence was inevitable, and that everyone including the Serbs know it, Drnovsek thought that it needed to be accomplished sooner rather than later, months, not years. He specifically mentioned 18 months as the outside limit. A gradual approach was not the way to go. He added that Kosovo needed to start to take over UNMIK responsibilities now. Drnovsek said that with the concessions from Kosovo and prospects for eventually joining Europe and the EU, Serbia would be able to move forward and to make necessary political and economic reforms. Kosovo would have to do the same.

5. (SBU) Comment. Drnovsek has strong political credentials both pre and post Yugoslavia. He was the penultimate president of the rotating presidency of Yugoslavia, and he has held the position of Prime Minister and now President almost continually since independence. He is well known in the region, highly regarded within Slovenia by all political factions, and his calm and even manner make him a natural

mediator. In this meeting, he clearly represented Slovenia's interest in helping its former compatriots to reach a settlement on sovereignty for Kosovo which would also ensure continuing peace and stability in the region. There is no ambition to interfere in the ongoing Contact Group process, however, there is a strong belief that the time is right for Slovenia to offer its good offices in the area of confidence building. As Drnovsek said, he, FM Rupel and PM Jansa "all speak their language."
ROBERTSON

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